IJCRT.ORG

ISSN: 2320-2882



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN RE-ENTRANTS IN IT INDUSTRY: A CASE STUDY ON KARNATAKA

1CRYSHAL C.M., 2Dr. Catherine Nirmala, 3Jais V Thomas 1Research Scholar, 2Research guide, 3Assistant Professor

1Mangalore University,2Mangalore University,3Kristu Jayanti College

ABSTRACT

Career reentry of women is a vital facet in today's compeers as all the sectors focus on gender diversity. However, women face a lot of challenges during their re-entry into career and are vulnerable to rejection during to multiple reasons in today's competitive era. In this background, the current study is conducted to find the challenges faced by women during their re-entry into IT sector. The study also intends to assess the perceived support factor during their re-entry. The study adopts purposive sampling technique under non probability sampling with n=122, a detailed questionnaire was constructed and the Overall Scale Reliability using Cronbach's Alpha is .960 thereby using factor analysis, with the help of SPSS. The study found that lack of job opportunities at the same level is a major challenge (m=3.57) while other factors include lack of lateral job opportunities (M=3.39) and lack of confidence (M=3.36). On the other hand, lack of flexible working hours (M=3.33) has been found as one of the major constraints for women during their re-entry into IT sector. The study found training in self-presentation (M=3.97) as the major perceived support factor, while it also suggested that the women must be connected in a professional network and keep in constant touch with employers and colleagues (M=3.93). To conclude, public policy intervention is essential in labor markets while organizations must take initiatives and frame police guidelines to ensure gender diversity, age and gender-based non-discrimination and provide equal opportunities for talented women re-entrants.

Keywords. Career break, women reentry, IT re-entry, workface, Women in Tech, COVID-19

1. INTRODUCTION

In the face of decades of progression towards workplace equality, women remain dolefully underrepresented in technology workforce. In Global Gender Gap Report 2021 (World Economic Forum, 2021a), India attained 140th position out of 156 countries with the highest gender gap in labor market up to 72% in pre-COVID era; while only 29.2% women have technical roles, only 14.6% reach senior roles. As per PIB (Press Information Bureau, 2021), 40% of global women STEM graduates are Indians whereas only 14 per cent land in STEM jobs. In terms of information technology industry, NASSCOM (NASSCOM, 2021a) cited that 35% revenue is contributed by women.

Out of the total net hiring during the financial year 2020, 44% recruited were females (World Economic Forum, 2021b). As per World Economic Forum report (2020), four industries including software and IT services continued to recruit females in senior management positions though the pandemic created a drastic shift in other domains. The report further mentions that the share of women hired into senior management roles increased from 24.2% in 2015 to 31% in 2020. Though huge number of potential women candidates are eligible for getting recruited, the extending gender gap in Indian IT industry might be due to two reasons such as high attrition rate and challenging re-entry.

While the former tend to occur due to structural, systemic, and societal barriers (Kirton and Robertson, 2018) such as marriage, maternity, work-life balance, health-related issues, work pressure, improper appraisal, non-cooperative team and financial needs (Gwal, 2016; Singh, Ganguli and David, 2017; NASSCOM, 2021b). For the latter i.e., challenging re-entry of women into IT industry, the concept of gender diversity at workplace boosts the entry of women in IT industry after a break in their career. Various firms in India initiated programs for women with career break such as Renew (L&T), Next Innings (Google), Rekindle (Amazon), Springboard (Microsoft), Recharge India (PayPal), Vapasi (Thoughtworks), Return to Work (Accenture) and so on (Debolina, 2021). However, some of the challenges faced by women during their re-entry are lack of recent work experience and suitable job opportunities (Adithya, 2019); workplace apathy, no support from family, and societal pressures (Tabassum and Nayak, 2021); socially responsible, gender disadvantage and work–family conflict (Alok, Banerjee and Kumar, 2021); lack of updated skills, low or same remuneration drawn prior to break and health issues (Sarora and Sharma, 2018) and so on.

COVID-19 has disrupted the functioning of humankind across the globe while IT industry tackled the same with dynamic business continuity plans such as Work-From-Home, technological advancements in hardware setup (minimal IT infrastructure, laptops etc.,), cloud computing, virtual applications for meetings and so on (Deloitte, 2020). However, the recruitment in IT industry reached 85% Y-O-Y growth in October 2021 as per Naukri report (Naukri.com, 2021). The sole reason behind this high recruitment is the need for digital transformation and the adoption of cloud technology, due to social distancing norms, as a part of curbing COVID-19 (Sahu, 2021).

In this background, the current study is aimed at identifying the challenges faced by women during reentry and to assess their perceived support factor in their re-entry. Though various studies have been conducted earlier about the re-entry of women into their career, no specific study has focused on the factors that assess the re-entry of women in IT industry, especially in Karnataka, one of the key tech hubs of India. So, the scope of this study is restricted to women re-entrants working in Karnataka state only. The women re-entrants working in IT and ITeS are targeted to get the responses. Further, the current study also explores the opportunities available for women during their re-entry into IT industry after COVID-19 crises since the pandemic has revolutionized the recruitment and retention strategies.

The technology also has fueled digital learning and networking platforms, allowing women to take a professional sabbatical to reskill and network in preparation for re-entry (Cukier et al., 2021). With increasing work from home options, flexible work timings (Sunaina Arora and Kumari, 2021), free training facilities offered by the employer (Microsoft, 2022; Thoughworks, 2022), paid internships (IBM, 2018) and support from the team and mentors, the findings from the current study will help the policy makers, industry leaders, talent acquisition teams and firms to fulfil the gaps and acquire women talents into their teams in their re-entry. With this motivation, the current study analyzes various support factors that are helpful in overcoming the challenges faced by women reentrants. The objectives of the study are as follows.

- To identify the challenges faced by women in IT industry during re-entry
- To assess the perceived support factors in their reentry.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Career re-entry is a challenging phase for most of the women across the globe. While studies have been conducted elsewhere, little to no studies conducted in Indian context in this regard. As per the review of literature, various reasons have been conducted to analyze the reasons behind women quitting their professional career (Cahusac and Kanji, 2014; Landivar, 2014; Kanji and Cahusac, 2015; Zimmerman and Clark, 2016). Various researchers (Lovejoy and Stone, 2012; Panteli, 2012; Greer, 2013; Nilsson and Ekberg, 2013; Gwal, 2016) cited 'lack of confidence' as one of the major barriers for women during their re-entry into their career. Lack of confidence in themselves is a result of knowledge gap as IT sector demands their employees to keep updated through professional courses. The expectation that ICT workers should frequently update their skills means that being a returner might only be a short term barrier, which could be overcome by undertaking appropriate training courses.

Nevertheless, rather than being employed by major multinational companies, in fact most ICT workers are employed by small and medium size enterprises (Marshall, 2010). Outdated skills is mentioned as one of the challenges faced by women during their re-entry into career (Lovejoy and Stone, 2012; Panteli, 2012; Greer, 2013; Gwal, 2016; Sarora and Sharma, 2018). Lack of family support (Valente, 2019; Alok, Banerjee and Kumar, 2021; Tabassum and Nayak, 2021) too was cited by a number of researchers in this regard. Kaushiva and Joshi (2020) assessed how far a policy can support the women in re-entering their career after a break. This policy support includes the completion of company-sponsored internship programs. Sarora and

Sharma (2018) mentioned that there are less number of prospects available for women when they try to restart their career.

In the study conducted among south Indian IT women, (Ravindran and Baral, 2013) mentioned that a few variables such as diversity climate, policy usage, work-family culture and organizational justice make a difference in their career re-entry. Some companies provide paid internships to help women with their transitions (Catapano, 2015; Stenglein, 2019). Bartoš and Pertold-Gebicka (2018) mentioned that a few employers exhibit discrimination against women who seek to re-start their career. Arora and Kumari (2021) mentioned that if flexible hours become a norm, more women tend to re-start their career. Intervention programs are important in refining women's position in the IT sector, recognizing their competences to act as a bridge for the transfer of knowledge (Panteli, 2012). Furthermore, the location of companies is often cited as a barrier.

Career re-entry of women should be an important factor in IT field as this sector is booming. To attract, promote and retain talented women at workplace, career re-entry of women should be given more importance than ever before. (Singh and Vanka, 2020) mentioned that IT women, who make a re-entry, are motivated by their search towards a strong career identity, high level of work centrality and also to regain financial independence. Further, the study also found that an active agency of women, a supportive ecosystem and life events that favor the career growth of women can ease their career re-entry. As a supportive policy for working mothers, the main focus of organization is increasing gender diversity. Organization has taken an initiative, where completion of internship programme is organized for women to help them in returning to the workforce post a career break. Result of this study showed that this support policy has a significant effect on evaluation of job fit (Kaushiva and Joshi, 2020).

In the study conducted by (Adithya, 2019), the researcher listed lack of recent work experience and suitable job opportunities as major reasons faced by women IT professionals when they try to make a re-entry into their career after a hiatus. This study was conducted among 80 women IT professionals and provided suggestions for a smooth career re-entry. The nature of women's activities during their career break may be crucial in their ability to re-enter the labor market. The longer the career breaks are, higher the likelihood that their knowledge becomes outdated and skills get deteriorate. This adversely affects the opportunities for women in their career re-entry. Noted economist Paul Krugman (Krugman, 2013) says that long-term unemployment leads to unemployability. This may be true in the case of potential re-entry women too. (Ilyashenko *et al.*, 2019) mentioned that women must undergo skill development programs during their professional break so as to cope up with job requirements. (Catapano, 2015; Stenglein, 2019) added that in addition to keeping in touch with the domain, women should be able to get training from executive trainers. Valente (2019); Kaushiva and Joshi (2020) cited that networking with colleagues at previous office and maintaining professional network too play a crucial role in career re-entry as internal job postings are high.

The researchers mentioned that women get motivated to re-start their career if they have a supporting family, work-life balance, appropriate child care (Landivar, 2014; Zimmerman and Clark, 2016; Bröckel, 2018; Valente, 2019; Sunaina Arora and Kumari, 2021) etc. Quill (2020) added that supportive family, equality among partners, sharing of domestic duties tend to encourage women for a professional re-entry. Ely *et al.* (2014)

mentioned that women prefer their family than job are most likely to guit their profession earlier. In this background, the current study attempts at identifying the challenges faced by women during their re-entry and to assess their perceived support factor in during their re-entry. The following hypotheses are framed to answer the research objective.

H0: There is no relationship between the challenges faced and expected support factor in women reentry.

H1: There is relationship between the challenges faced and expected support factor in women reentry

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study is mainly based on primary data. The study adopts purposive sampling technique under non probability sampling with a sample size of 122, a detailed questionnaire was constructed and the Overall Scale Reliability using Cronbach's Alpha is .960 thereby using factor analysis, with the help of SPSS.

Primary data: Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire through Google forms.

Secondary data: Secondary data collected from different types of sources such as peer-reviewed journal articles, newspapers, books, websites, conference proceedings, company reports etc., were used to support the study.

The study adopted probability sampling with an emphasis on stratified sampling technique to identify the reentry of women into workforce, followed by convenience sampling technique under non-probability sampling with a sample size of 122, thereby limiting itself to non-parametric data analysis using factor analysis with the help of SPSS. The results for demographic information are covered from tables 6 to 13 and are IJCRI presented in the appendix.

4. DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1. Challenges faced by women in their re entry

Challenges	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Lack of confidence	3.36	1.390	3
Lack of family support	2.65	1.363	9
Lack of better prospects	3.30	1.303	5
Outdated skills	3.04	1.346	7
Lack of job opportunities-at the same level	3.57	1.290	1
Lack of lateral job opportunities (No suitable position to return to)	3.39	1.231	2

Challenges	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Employer/Recruiting agencies discriminations against women who have taken a break	3.11	1.425	6
Age Discrimination	2.90	1.324	8
Lack of flexible working hours	3.33	1.368	4

Table 1 depicts various challenges faced by women during their re-entry, in which 'Lack of job opportunities-at the same level' remains the most prominent challenge as it has the highest mean value (M=3.57). Then, the second major challenge was 'Lack of lateral job opportunities' (No suitable position to return to) (M=3.39) followed by 'Lack of confidence' (M=3.36), 'Lack of flexible working hours' (M=3.33), 'Lack of better prospects' (M=3.30) and 'Employer/Recruiting agencies discriminations against women who have taken a break' (M=3.11). However, 'outdated skills' (M=3.04), 'Age Discrimination' (M=2.90) and 'Lack of family support' (M=2.65) are considered as minor challenges by the respondents during their career re-entry.

Table 2. Support factors

Support Factors	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Attending training & skill development Programmes during break	3.92	1.034	3
Maintaining networks/ Constant contact with employers and colleagues	3.93	.997	2
Training in self-presentation	3.97	1.028	1
Quality/nature of work done before career break	3.91	1.077	4
Position held before career break	3.83	1.133	5
Done individual projects before and during the breakup	3.54	1.159	7
Training to update sector or professional knowledge	3.79	1.107	6
Coaching taken from an executive trainer	3.48	1.174	8

Table 2 shows that the most perceived support factor is 'Training in self-presentation' as it has the highest mean value (M=3.97). The second best support factor is 'maintaining networks/ Constant contact with employers and colleagues' (M=3.93) followed by 'Attending training & skill development Programmes during

break' (3.92), 'Quality/nature of work done before career break' (3.91), 'Position held before career break' (3.83) and 'Training to update sector or professional knowledge' (3.79). 'Individual projects before and during the breakup' (3.54) and 'Coaching taken from an executive trainer' (3.48) are given less importance by the participants as support factors.

4.2 Factor Validity Analysis

4.2.1 Challenging Factors

Using a Varimax rotation of 9 items, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was conducted. KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity for challenges faced by women reentrants were performed for the scale items. Table 3 provides the results of the analyses.

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett's Test									
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Adequacy.	Measure of Sampling	.911							
Bartlett's Test	Approx. Chi-Square	697.412							
Sphericity Test	df	36							
Sphericity	Sig.	.000							

As shown in the table, KMO measure is 0.911 which very well exceeds the minimum of 0.5, hence the sampling is found to be adequate. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is significant as the 'p' value is less than 0.01 and the test value is 697.412. Therefore, it can be concluded that there are correlations in the data set appropriate for factor analysis since the stability of the dataset for factor analysis is confirmed.

4.2.2 Support Factors

Using a Varimax rotation of 8 items, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was conducted. KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity for challenges faced by women reentrants were performed for the scale items. Table 4 presents the results of the analyses.

Table. 4 KMO and Bartlett's Test									
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Adequacy.	M	leasure	of	Sampling	.918				
Bartlett's Test	of	Approx	k. Ch	i-Square	731.257				
Sphericity Test	O1	df			28				
~ p		Sig.			.000				

As shown in the table, KMO measure is 0.918, which very well exceeds the minimum of 0.5, hence sampling is found to be adequate. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is significant as the 'p' value is less than 0.01 and the test value is 731.257. Therefore, it can be concluded that there are correlations in the data set appropriate for factor analysis since the stability of the dataset for factor analysis is confirmed. The results shown in table 5 from correlation analysis depicts that majority of the parameters regarding the challenges faced by women reentrant and their perceived support factors show a significant relationship since the 'p' value is less than 0.05. Therefore, a significant positive correlation exists between the challenges faced and perceived support factor of women reentrants as all the r values are positive.

5. FINDINGS

The study findings infer that there exists a significant positive correlation between the challenges faced and perceived support factor for women during their career re-entry. The researcher confirmed the stability of the dataset for factor analysis. The major findings of the current study are discussed herewith. Lack of job opportunities-at the same level is a major challenge faced by women. This study findings is in line with (Adithya, 2019) whom mentioned that the women find it challenging to be employed in the same hierarchy during their career re-entry. While lack of lateral job opportunities (No suitable position to return to) is one of the major challenges found by this study, (McGrath, Driscoll and Gross, 2005) mentioned that women, in their career re-entry, prefer low or comparable responsibilities to maintain a fine balance between their job commitments and personal commitments.

Lack of confidence has been cited as one of the major challenges cited by most researchers (Greer, 2013); (Gwal, 2016); (Lovejoy and Stone, 2012; Panteli, 2012) 2011; (Nilsson and Ekberg, 2013) while the current study findings too empirically establish the stance. The study conducted by (Stenglein, 2019) mentioned that HR managers and leaders should evaluate the volunteer leadership experiences for women during their reentry which in turn boosts their confidence to be hired in higher positions of an organization. Lack of flexible working hours is found as a major challenge in this study as cited by (Sunaina; Arora and Kumari, 2021) as well since the women who took a break continued to work part-time or study or take entrepreneurial jobs for about 3-6 hours a day during their break. So, women prefer flexible work options for which the organizations must introduce policy changes.

As per the current study results, 'Lack of better prospects' is one of the key challenges which reflects the views of (Ramakers *et al.*, 2015). In line with this, the study results establish that women face discrimination during their re-entry by their Employer/Recruiting agencies since they took a break. These findings are in line with Aditya's study. Training in self-presentation has been found as the major perceived support factor, according to women during their career re-entry (Catapano, 2015; Stenglein, 2019). Further, other factors such as Maintaining networks/ Constant contact with employers and colleagues (Valente (2019); Kaushiva and Joshi (2020)), Attending training & skill development Programmes during break, Quality/nature of work done before career break, Position held before career break, and Training to update sector or professional knowledge also considered to the most perceived support factors.

The career re-entry of women is supported by various factors such as supportive family/workplace environment, appropriate childcare facilities, suitable remuneration and position in the organization, non-discriminative leaders and talent acquisition teams and enthusiasm to climb the organizational ladder. The companies should provide on-the-job training and help the women re-entrants to build their career through professional support and maintain gender balance in organizational setting (Marinelli, Male and Lord, 2021). The managers should be provided specific training of how to help professional mothers to overcome their constraints (Noon, 2020). In spite of the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) act 2016 has been in practice, most of the women are yet to enjoy the benefits of the act. So, policies should be implemented with full force at the workplace (Sahadevan, 2021).

6. SUGGESTION AND CONCLUSION

After the sudden outbreak and two waves of COVID-19, there is a paradigm shift occurred in IT workspace such as work-from-home options, dynamically-changed talent acquisition process and talent retention and re-training processes. Most of the companies have started new initiatives that boost the entry of women into career after a break. The economic burdens of extensive lockdowns and its consequences made Indian households to ensure a fine balance between health and finance. Burnout has turned to be a real problem after continuous lockdown which further impacted the confidence levels among women who took a break from their career. In this scenario, re-entry of women into IT career can be boosted if the women get support from the organization and their family. Organizations must ensure gender balance at workplace and can gain benefit out of experienced and job-ready talents. While they need to work on policy guidelines that facilitate and retain the talents into the team.

Family, on the other hand, should extend support to the women re-entrant in terms of providing appropriate childcare, sharing household works etc. The study reveals that there is a positive relationship between the challenges faced and the perceived support factor of women reentrants. The support factors play a vital role in women's career reentry and career success. When women have support factors the efficiency and productivity of women reentrant can lead to upward trend thereby can increase the workforce efficiency. Public policy intervention is relatively essential in labour markets with the need for organizations to be more responsive to upkeep unambiguous needs of women career reentrants.

The study has a few limitations such as focus on only one domain i.e., IT with a limited sample size in a specific geographical location. The researcher has planned to extend the sample size in future focusing Karnataka, while other researchers are recommended to investigate the theme in other IT hubs of India such as Hyderabad, Chennai, Delhi NCR and Pune. India has already provided more than 175 crores vaccination doses as on 25th February 2022. So, the future researchers can investigate the employment of women re-entrants as most of the IT organizations have opened physical offices to its employees, instead of work-from-home option.

REFERENCES

Adithya (2019) Career re-entry: Challenges faced by women IT professionals. LOYOLA COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES. Available at:

http://digitallibrary.loyolacollegekerala.edu.in:8080/jspui/bitstream/123456789/1786/1/ADITHYA S.pdf.

Alok, S., Banerjee, S. and Kumar, N. (2021) 'Will she stay or will she quit: determinants of career persistence and non-persistence amongst women workers of India's IT sector', *South Asian Journal of Business Studies*, ahead-of-p(ahead-of-print). doi: 10.1108/SAJBS-08-2020-0276.

Arora, Sunaina and Kumari, N. (2021) 'The Future of Work: Career Reentry Programs for Women in the Workforce', *Organization Development Journal*, 39(4), pp. 21–33.

Arora, Sunaina; and Kumari, N. (2021) 'The Future of Work: Career Reentry Programs for Women in the Workforce', *Organization Development Journal*, 39(4), pp. 21–33. Available at: https://www.proquest.com/docview/2592359448?pq-origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true.

Bartoš, V. and Pertold-Gebicka, B. (2018) 'Parental leave length, social norms, and female labor market reentry frictions', *International Journal of Manpower*, 39(4), pp. 600–620. doi: 10.1108/IJM-09-2017-0235.

Bröckel, M. (2018) 'The Role of Partners' Support for Women's Reentry Into Employment After a Child-Related Career Break in Germany', *Journal of Family Issues*, 39(7), pp. 1739–1769. doi: 10.1177/0192513X16653435.

Cahusac, E. and Kanji, S. (2014) 'Giving Up: How Gendered Organizational Cultures Push Mothers Out', Gender, Work & Organization, 21(1), pp. 57–70. doi: 10.1111/gwao.12011.

Catapano, J. (2015) 'Re-Entry: What Every Physician Leader Should Know', *Physician Leadership Journal*, 2(4), pp. 72–74.

Cukier, W. et al. (2021) The Mother of Invention: Skills for Innovation in the Post-Pandemic World.

Debolina, B. (2021) *All The Returning Women's Programmes By Tech Firms In India*, https://analyticsindiamag.com/. Available at: https://analyticsindiamag.com/all-the-returning-womens-programmes-by-tech-firms-in-india/ (Accessed: 10 February 2022).

Deloitte (2020) *COVID-19 impact: IT due diligence considerations and technology enablement for the future.*Available at: https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/in/Documents/finance/in-fa-DeloitteIndia_COVIDImpact_ITDDConsiderations_24Apr20_Updated.pdf.

Ely, R., Stone, P. and Ammerman, C. (2014) 'Rethink what you "know" about high-achieving women', *Harvard Business Review*, 92(12), pp. 100–109.

Greer, T. W. (2013) 'Facilitating successful re-entries in the United States: Training and development for women returners', *New Horizons in Adult Education and Human Resource Development*, 25(3), pp. 41–61. doi:

10.1002/nha3.20030.

Gwal, R. (2016) 'Working Women: Career Breaks and Re-entry in a Fast-changing Business Environment', *Metamorphosis: A Journal of Management Research*, 15(1), pp. 1–9. doi: 10.1177/0972622516629021.

IBM (2018) *IBM's Tech Re-Entry Program*. Available at: https://www.ibm.com/in-en/employment/techreentry/ (Accessed: 10 February 2022).

Ilyashenko, L. *et al.* (2019) 'Educational environment as a development resource for the learning process', *Amazonia Investiga*, 8(18), pp. 303–312.

Kanji, S. and Cahusac, E. (2015) 'Who am I? Mothers' shifting identities, loss and sensemaking after workplace exit', *Human Relations*, 68(9), pp. 1415–1436. doi: 10.1177/0018726714557336.

Kaushiva, P. and Joshi, C. (2020) 'Women's re-entry after a career break: Efficacy of support programs', *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 39(8), pp. 849–864. doi: 10.1108/EDI-09-2019-0240.

Kirton, G. and Robertson, M. (2018) 'Sustaining and advancing IT careers: Women's experiences in a UK-based IT company', *The Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, 27(2), pp. 157–169. doi: 10.1016/j.jsis.2018.01.001.

Krugman, P. (2013) 'The Mutilated Economy', 7 November. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/08/opinion/krugman-the-mutilated-economy.html.

Landivar, L. C. (2014) 'Opting Out, Scaling Back, or Business-as-Usual? An Occupational Assessment of Women's Employment', *Sociological Forum*, 29(1), pp. 189–214.

Lovejoy, M. and Stone, P. (2012) 'Opting Back In: The Influence of Time at Home on Professional Women's Career Redirection after Opting Out', *Gender, Work & Organization*, 19(6), pp. 631–653. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-0432.2010.00550.x.

Marinelli, M., Male, S. and Lord, L. (2021) 'Women engineers' advancement to management and leadership roles – enabling resources and implications for higher education', in 2021 IEEE Global Engineering Education Conference (EDUCON), pp. 463–467. doi: 10.1109/EDUCON46332.2021.9454058.

Marshall, V. W. (2010) 'A Life Course Perspective on Information Technology Work', *Journal of Applied Gerontology*. SAGE Publications Inc, 30(2), pp. 185–198. doi: 10.1177/0733464810367791.

McGrath, M., Driscoll, M. and Gross, M. (2005) *BACK IN THE GAME Returning to Business After a Hiatus: Experiences and Recommendations for Women, Employers, and Universities*. Available at: http://d1c25a6gwz7q5e.cloudfront.net/papers/1298.pdf.

Microsoft (2022) *Springboard REBOOT. REBUILD. REBOUND.* Available at: https://www.microsoft.com/en-in/about/empowering-women.aspx (Accessed: 10 February 2022).

NASSCOM (2021a) *India's Tech Industry: Women for the Techade*. Available at: https://nasscom.in/system/files/secure-pdf/indias-tech-industry-women-for-the-techade.pdf.

NASSCOM (2021b) *Women And IT Scorecard – India*. Available at: https://nasscom.in/knowledge-center/publications/women-and-it-scorecard-—india.

Naukri.com (2021) *Naukri Jobspeak report (Hiring trends by city, industry and experience)*. Available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kqCnxLqKX7e_tQB9qlps_JwL94Q9tisP/view.

Nilsson, S. and Ekberg, K. (2013) 'Employability and work ability: Returning to the labour market after long-term absence', *Work*, 44(4), pp. 449–457. doi: 10.3233/WOR-2012-1402.

Noon, H. (2020) 'Looking forward to going back? The experience of career decision-making for first-time mothers and the implications for coaches', *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 18(1), pp. 88–102. Available at: https://repository.uel.ac.uk/download/953af40c14da5dc16543fabb6ca90da060d3fc35905f29022e7f16621a919 419/233932/18_1_8.pdf.

Panteli, N. (2012) 'A community of practice view of intervention programmes: the case of women returning to IT', *Information Systems Journal*, 22(5), pp. 391–405. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2575.2012.00415.x.

Press Information Bureau (2021) *Vice President calls for bridging gender divide in STEM-related employment*. Available at: https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1686221.

Quill, N. (2020) Experiences of women in Ireland re-entering the workplace following a career break. Dublin Business School.

Ramakers, A. et al. (2015) 'Down before they go in? Pre-prison labour market attachment in the Netherlands.', European Journal of Criminal Policy and Research, 21, pp. 65–82.

Ravindran, B. and Baral, R. (2013) 'Factors Affecting the Work Attitudes of Indian Reentry Women in the IT Sector', *Department of Management Studies, Indian Institute of Technology Madras*. Available at: http://vslir.iima.ac.in:8080/jspui/bitstream/11718/11518/1/GS-PP-224-

Factors_Affecting_the_Work_Attitudes_of_Indian_Reentry_Women-112-Ravindran_b.pdf.

Sahadevan, S. (2021) Work-Motherhood Transition: Implication on workforce. doi: 10.13140/RG.2.2.30551.39848.

Sahu, A. (2021) 'Why is there increased hiring for technology-related positions in India?', *HRWorld*, *The Economic times*. Available at: https://hr.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/trends/why-is-there-increased-hiring-for-technology-related-positions-in-india/81503106.

Sarora, O. and Sharma, P. C. (2018) 'Challenges faced by women professionals in seeking job after a career break in IT companies in North India(Delhi/NCR)', SMART Journal of Business Management Studies, 14(1),

p. 22. doi: 10.5958/2321-2012.2018.00003.9.

Singh, S., Ganguli, S. and David, R. (2017) 'Women workforce attrition dynamics in Indian IT/ITES sector', Qualitative Report, 22. doi: 10.46743/2160-3715/2017.2457.

Singh, S. and Vanka, S. (2020) 'Career Break, Not a Brake on Career: A Study of the Reasons and Enablers of Women's Re-entry to Technology Careers in India', Business Perspectives and Research. SAGE Publications India, 9(2), pp. 195–214. doi: 10.1177/2278533720964328.

Stenglein, J. M. (2019) Exploring the Volunteer Leadership Experiences Needed to Help Women with Career Reentry into Management and Executive Leadership Positions: A Qualitative Phenomenological Study. Colorado Technical University.

Tabassum, N. and Nayak, B. S. (2021) 'Gender Stereotypes and Their Impact on Women's Career Progressions from a Managerial Perspective', IIM Kozhikode Society & Management Review, 10(2), pp. 192-208. doi: 10.1177/2277975220975513.

Thoughworks (2022) Vapasi-Bringing women back to work. Available at: https://www.thoughtworks.com/enin/careers/program/talk-tech/vapasi (Accessed: 10 February 2022).

Valente, A. B. (2019) Back On The Career Path: A Qualitative Study Of Employment Transitions For Women Who Take A Career Break And Their Re-Entry Experiences. Northeastern University.

World Economic Forum (2021a) Global Gender Gap Report 2021. Geneva. Available https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf.

World Economic Forum (2021b) Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Economic Gender Gaps - Global Gender Gap Report 2021.

Zimmerman, L. M. and Clark, M. A. (2016) 'Opting-out and opting-in: a review and agenda for future research', Career Development International, 21(6), pp. 603–633. doi: 10.1108/CDI-10-2015-0137.

APPENDIX

Table 5. Correlation analysis between the challenges faced and perceived support factor

		Attending	Maintaini	Training	Quality/nat	Positio	Done	Training	Coachi	Mentori
		training &	ng	in self-	ure of work	n held	individu	to update	ng	ng from
		skill	net <mark>works</mark> /	presentati	done before	before	al	sector or	taken	a senior
		developme	Constant	on	career	career	projects	professio	from an	colleagu
		nt	contact		break	break	before	nal	executi	e
		Program	with				and	knowledg	ve	
		mes	employers			1/2	during	e	trainer	
		during	and	_			the			
		break	colleagues				breakup			
Lack of	Pearson	.405**	.253**	.379**	.362**	.370**	.410**	.328**	.394**	.457**
confidence	Correlati	3 L.		-11			680	*		
	on			0		< N	O.			
	Sig. (2-	0	0.005	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	tailed)									
	N	120	120	120	120	119	119	118	120	120
Lack of family	Pearson	0.165	0.116	.205*	.243**	.294**	.324**	.253**	.424**	.495**
support	Correlati									
	on									

		Attending training & skill developme nt Program mes during	Maintaini ng networks/ Constant contact with employers and	Training in self- presentati on	Quality/nat ure of work done before career break	Positio n held before career break	Done individu al projects before and during the	Training to update sector or professio nal knowledg e	Coachi ng taken from an executi ve trainer	Mentori ng from a senior colleagu e
	Sig. (2-	break 0.073	colleagues 0.212	0.026	0.008	0.001	breakup 0	0.006	0	0
	tailed)	0.075	0.212	3.020	0.000	0.001		3.555		
	N	118	118	118	118	117	117	116	118	118
Lack of better prospects	Pearson Correlati on	.360**	.258**	.309**	.370**	.328**	.302**	.249**	.370**	.382**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0.004	0.001	0	0	0.001	0.006	0	0
	N	120	120	120	120	119	119	118	120	120
Outdated skills	Pearson Correlati on	.368**	.217*	.319**	.297**	.324**	.287**	.331**	.437**	.517**

		Attending training & skill developme nt Program mes during break	Maintaini ng networks/ Constant contact with employers and colleagues	Training in self- presentati on	Quality/nat ure of work done before career break	Positio n held before career break	Done individu al projects before and during the breakup	Training to update sector or professio nal knowledg e	Coachi ng taken from an executi ve trainer	Mentori ng from a senior colleagu e
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0.017	0	0.001	0	0.002	0	0	0
	N	120	120	120	120	119	119	118	120	120
Lack of job opportunities-at the same level	Pearson Correlati on	.347**	.262**	.285**	.216*	.338**	.213*	.301**	.345**	.407**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0.004	0.002	0.017	0	0.02	0.001	0	0
	N	121	121	121	121	120	120	119	121	121
Lack of lateral job opportunities (No suitable	Pearson Correlati on	.345**	.467**	.442**	.267**	.399**	.329**	.394**	.401**	.479**

		Attending	Maintaini	Training	Quality/nat	Positio	Done	Training	Coachi	Mentori
		training &	ng	in self-	ure of work	n held	individu	to update	ng	ng from
		skill	networks/	presentati	done before	before	al	sector or	taken	a senior
		developme	Constant	on	career	career	projects	professio	from an	colleagu
		nt	contact		break	break	before	nal	executi	e
		Program	with				and	knowledg	ve	
		mes	em <mark>ployers</mark>				during	e	trainer	
		during	and				the			
		break	<mark>coll</mark> eagues				breakup			
position to return		•				1/2				
to)										
	Sig. (2-	0	0	0	0.003	0	0	0	0	0
	tailed)									
	N	119	119	119	119	118	118	117	119	119
Employer/Recrui	Pearson	.384**	.329**	.344**	.275**	.366**	.395**	.363**	.465**	.485**
ting agencies	Correlati					10	,			
discriminations	on									
against women										
who have taken a										
break										

		Attending	Maintaini	Training	Quality/nat	Positio	Done	Training	Coachi	Mentori
		training &	ng	in self-	ure of work	n held	individu	to update	ng	ng from
		skill	networks/	presentati	done before	before	al	sector or	taken	a senior
		developme	Constant	on	career	career	projects	professio	from an	colleagu
		nt	contact		break	break	before	nal	executi	e
		Program	with				and	knowledg	ve	
		mes	em <mark>ployers</mark>				during	e	trainer	
		during	and				the			
		break	<mark>coll</mark> eagues				breakup			
	Sig. (2-	0	0	0	0.002	0	0	0	0	0
	tailed)			_						
	N	120	120	120	120	119	119	118	120	120
Age	Pearson	.298**	.256**	.351**	.252**	.358**	.428**	.386**	.455**	.465**
Discrimination	Correlati	No.					28			
	on			0		< N	0.			
	Sig. (2-	0.001	0.005	0	0.006	0	0	0	0	0
	tailed)									
	N	120	120	120	120	119	119	118	120	120
Lack of flexible	Pearson	.290**	.338**	.412**	.357**	.468**	.381**	.395**	.512**	.610**
working hours	Correlati									
	on									

		Attending	Maintaini	Training	Quality/nat	Positio	Done	Training	Coachi	Mentori
		training &	ng	in self-	ure of work	n held	individu	to update	ng	ng from
		skill	networks/	presentati	done before	before	al	sector or	taken	a senior
		developme	Constant	on	career	career	projects	professio	from an	colleagu
		nt	contact		break	break	before	nal	executi	e
		Program	with				and	knowledg	ve	
		mes	em <mark>ployers</mark>				during	e	trainer	
		during	and				the			
		break	<mark>coll</mark> eagues				breakup			
	Sig. (2-	0.001	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	tailed)									
	N	120	120	120	120	119	119	118	120	120
Decrease in	Pearson	.372**	.385**	.374**	.337**	.327**	.297**	.309**	.381**	.396**
salary package	Correlati	X ~					6			
	on			_0		< \	0.			
	Sig. (2-	0	0	0	0	0	0.001	0.001	0	0
	tailed)									
	N	121	121	121	121	120	120	119	121	121
** Correlation is si	** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).									
* Correlation is sig	nificant at t	he 0.05 level (2-tailed).							
	-									

DEMOGRAPHIC DETAIL

Table 6. Age

Age		Frequency	Percent	
	Below 25	5	4.1	
	25-30	72	59.0	
Valid	31-35	27	22.1	
Valla	36-45	14	11.5	
	Above 45	4	3.3	
	Total	122	100.0	

Table 7. Marital Status

	Marital Status		Frequency	Percent
	Valid	Never Married /	42	34.4
		Single	_	
		Married	77	63.1
		Awaiting divorce	1	.8
		Divorced	2	1.6
		Total	122	100.0

Table 8. Educational Qualification

Educational Qualification		Frequency	Percent	
	Diploma	4	3.3	
	Graduation	40	32.8	
	Post-Graduation	50	41.0	
Valid	Professional Graduates	11	9.0	
, and	Post Graduate	16	13.1	
	Professionals		13.1	
	Doctorates	1	.8	
	Total	122	100.0	

Table 9. Family Type

		Frequency	Percent
	Joint	36	29.5
Valid	Nuclear	86	70.5
	Total	122	100.0

Table 10. Industry type/Job area

		Frequency	Percent
	1. IT	58	47.5
Valid	2.ITeS	64	52.5
	Total	122	100.0

Table 11. Annual Income (Self)

		Frequency	Percent
	1. Less than 2,00,000	43	35.2
	2. 2,00,000- 4,00,000	37	30.3
Valid	3. 4,00,000- 8,00,000	30	24.6
	4. Above 8,00,000	12	9.8
	Total	122	100.0

Table 12. Work Experience in years

		Frequency	Percent
	1-2 years	25	20.5
	3-5 years	51	41.8
Valid	6-10 years	33	27.0
vana	More than 10 years	13	10.7
	Total	122	100.0

Table 13. Frequency of break in your career

		Frequency	Percent
	1	96	78.7
	2	22	18.0
Valid	3	2	1.6
	More than 3	2	1.6
	Total	122	100.0

